



45th District 1999 Constituent Report and Survey Results



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State government
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Joint Pension Policy
Appellate Indigent Defense
National chair,
Criminal Justice
Committee for the
American Legislative
Exchange Council

Dear friends and neighbors,

Creating better schools and better roads — these were the most notable accomplishments of the 1999 Legislature. After a 105-day regular session and a three-day special session, state lawmakers completed their work in Olympia and have adjourned for the year.

I would like to thank the many 45th District residents who responded to the survey I mailed to you during this year's legislative session. The results were quite valuable in helping me identify the issues that you care about most. This report includes the results of the survey and an update on the issues that are most important to the people in our communities.

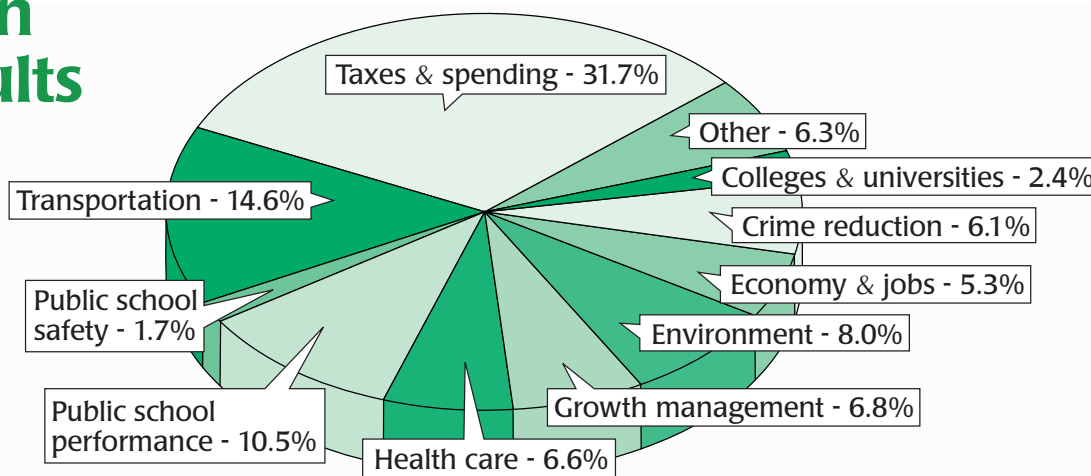
Thank you for the privilege of serving as your state representative and for the opportunity to work with you to make our community a better place to live.

Sincerely,

Kathy Lambert
Kathy Lambert
State Representative

1999 Session Survey Results

The results are in! Taxes and spending, transportation, education and the environment are the top concerns of residents in our local communities who responded to a recent questionnaire on legislative issues.



This chart shows the top priorities of those who responded to the survey I sent to households in the 45th District earlier this year. Enclosed you'll find the complete results of this survey.

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#1 Taxes and Spending

Taxpayers neglected in battle over operating budget

The two-year operating budget adopted by the Legislature offers some good things. It makes needed investments in K-12 and higher education, some of which will help us achieve our ultimate goal of improving student achievement. I regret, however, that the final budget offers no meaningful tax relief for Washington citizens, instead spending virtually every dollar under the legal limit.

The proposed budget I supported would have provided \$160 million in tax relief, and held overall spending \$179 million lower. Among the tax cut bills considered was a measure I introduced that would have **required voter approval of any increases in state or local property taxes**. This would help control government's appetite for spending. Other tax relief proposals I supported included the following:

- **Eliminate the sales tax on non-prescription medicine.**
- **Limit the state property tax assessment increases for senior citizens.**
- **Expand property tax breaks for fixed-income seniors and disabled veterans.**

Unfortunately, none of these proposals passed the Legislature.

#2 Transportation

Transportation fares well, finally

I remain concerned about the condition of our transportation system and the impact on our quality of life. Lawmakers approved a \$4 billion transportation budget this session with significant highway improvements targeted for our local communities. The

transportation budget lays the groundwork for a six-year transportation investment of more than \$9 billion — the greatest transportation effort in Washington's history. The following local projects are targeted for funding:

State Route 202

- **\$46 million for improvements, including safety improvements at 228th Avenue (near Alcott School)**

Interstate 405

- **\$10.5 million for design and construction improvements**

State Route 520

- **\$4 million for improvements, including construction at the SR 202 interchange**

#3 Public School Performance

Improving the Quality of Education for our Children

Our continuing commitment to K-12 education is unparalleled. We have focused our efforts and our resources on one primary goal: increasing student academic achievement. I believe the key to improving education is to give schools and teachers the support they need, hold them accountable for results, and make school a safe place for our children and teachers.

Having established higher academic standards and achievement tests to monitor student progress, the Legislature's focus has turned toward school accountability. This session we launched a program to issue report cards to the public on the performance of their local schools. In addition the state will be offering greater assistance to schools that are failing to meet the higher academic standards.

Protecting students and teachers from the threat of violence

Fortunately, here in Washington, we had been working to address school safety long before the tragedy in Littleton, CO. This session we took strong action requiring the detention and evaluation of youngsters who are arrested for possession of a firearm on school grounds. We provided \$7 million in grants to help local schools pay for safety improvements, such as hiring additional safety personnel or equipment or establishing alternative education programs to deal with disruptive students. In addition, we adopted a measure I strongly supported which encourages the sharing of information between schools and law enforcement to better identify and respond to students who pose a potential threat.



#4 Environment

Protecting salmon without hurting people

Legislation approved this session will provide us with an additional \$200 million in state and federal funds for salmon restoration and create a new salmon board to oversee the distribution of this funding. I am really pleased with the level of commitment to restore salmon runs.

Unfortunately, by vetoing some accountability provisions of this legislation, the governor has given a great deal of centralized authority to the appointed salmon board. We have made enhancements to approximately 180 miles of stream habitat in Washington in the last year by funding projects in communities with the help of local groups and volunteers. This proves that a salmon bureaucracy is unnecessary.

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Complete survey results

Here are complete results of the 45th District constituent survey. Thank you once again to those who took the time to respond.

Taxes

Would you support a measure that would require a vote of the people for any increase in state or local property taxes?

Yes - 76% No - 24%

In your opinion, how much lower should your property taxes be?

5% lower - 14%

10% lower - 21%

15% lower - 9%

20% lower - 27%

Other - 29%

Would you support a constitutional amendment to allow "value averaging" so that sharp increases in property values would not result in large annual tax increases?

Yes - 81% No - 19%

Criminal Justice

Would you say our communities are safer or not as safe as they were five years ago?

Safer - 28% Less safe - 23%

About the same - 49%

Education

What do you think is the best way to improve our public education system?

Better management at local level 13%

Better policies by Legislature 3%

More school accountability 17%

Smaller class size 26%

Training/testing for teachers 14%

Increased funding 10%

Different curriculum 2%

Increase choices for parents 15%

45th District Constituent Priorities

Recipients were asked to rank 10 issues in order of importance. Below are the top three choices of the survey respondents.

	1 st choice	2 nd choice	3 rd choice
Colleges & universities	2.4%	3.8%	4.0%
Crime reduction	6.1%	10.1%	10.0%
Economy & jobs	5.3%	9.0%	11.2%
Environment	8.0%	10.0%	10.5%
Growth management	6.8%	11.4%	8.5%
Health care	6.6%	9.2%	11.1%
Public school performance	10.5%	14.2%	12.5%
Public school safety	1.7%	5.3%	5.7%
Taxes & spending	31.7%	10.3%	8.5%
Transportation	14.6%	15.4%	16.6%
Other	6.3%	1.5%	1.4%

To give parents a greater choice of schools for their children, would you support creating independent public schools, or charter schools, that would be state-funded but would be free to operate in a less restrictive manner than existing public schools?

Yes - 54% No - 46%

State Spending

Do you support the continued use of spending limits to control the growth in government spending?

Yes - 86% No - 14%

Would you support a reduction in state spending on social services if it could be shown that community groups, churches, and other charitable organizations were prepared to provide these services instead?

Yes - 64% No - 36%

Transportation

Which of the following best describes your opinion of carpool (HOV) lanes?

HOV lanes are useful 35%

Open up during non-peak hours 40%

HOV ineffective,
open up at all times 25%

Rank the following in order of importance regarding transportation problems (top choice shown).

Improve existing roads 30%

Add new North/South corridor 25%

Increase public transportation 45%

Regulatory Reform

Would you support a new law to allow state government to contract out for services that would meet the same or higher quality standards at a lower cost to the taxpayers?

Yes - 90% No - 10%

Would you support changing current mailing restrictions for state representatives to allow better communication between constituents and their elected officials?

Yes - 62% No - 38%

Would you support a law that would prohibit any business, with the exception of financial services, from requiring you to disclose your social security number?

Yes - 88% No - 12%

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Responding to constituent and district concerns;

Lambert bills become law

One of my highest priorities each session is working on issues brought to me by people in our district. I was pleased that the Legislature passed several bill which I introduced, including measures to clean-up political campaigns and to make our court system more efficient and more responsive to the needs of victims and families.

Courts established to resolve family cases

After months of observing court proceedings and interviewing citizens and court officials, I developed a House Bill 1663 to expand the unified family court pilot program. The program establishes special courts to adjudicate multiple domestic cases (divorces, paternity suits, juvenile offenses, domestic violence, etc.) that involve a single family. Unified family courts are not only more efficient, they are more effective than traditional courts in resolving these cases.

Political campaign reform

House Bill 1673, which received national media attention, will hold political candidates and campaign organizations accountable for false advertising. The bill makes it unlawful to knowingly and maliciously sponsor political advertising which contains false statements or facts to the benefit or detriment of a candidate. I hope this measure will begin to restore the citizens' confidence in the political process.

Simplifying adoption laws

House Bill 1407, would make adoption an easier choice for families by giving biological parents more say in the placement of the child. It would also protect children who are born as a result of a rape.



Rep. Lambert greets a boyscout troop visiting the state Capitol in February. Lambert introduced a resolution this session honoring the 97,000 youngsters and volunteers who participate in the Boy Scouts of America in Washington.

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